

REMARKS

By the present amendment, claims 7 to 12 are pending in the application.

Claim 7 is the only independent claim.

Restriction Requirement

Applicants hereby affirm the election of the claims of Group II, i.e., method claims 2 to 6 for further prosecution in this application.

Applicants submit that new claims 7 to 12 of the present amendment are method claims within the meaning of elected Group II. New method claims 7 to 12 will hereinafter be discussed.

Non-elected claim 1 has been canceled by the present amendment without prejudice to the filing of a divisional application directed to the subject matter of canceled claim 1.

Claims

Claim 7

New independent method claim 7 is a combination of prior dependent method claim 2 and product claim 1.

The steel composition of prior claim 1 has been inserted into method claim 7. The composition of the galvannealed layer of prior claim 1 has been inserted into method claim 7. The relationship between the tensile strength and elongation of prior claim 1 has been inserted into new method claim 7.

The substantive method steps of prior method claim 2 have been retained in new method claim 7. New method claim 7 adds non-substantive language to the substantive method steps of prior method claim 2 in order to improve clarity. By way of example, it is submitted that in new method claim 7, it is clear that the annealing step, cooling step and holding step come prior to the hot-dip galvanizing step.

A continuous hot-dip galvanizing facility relates to the annealing step, cooling step, holding step and hot-dip galvanizing step.

The “effective Al concentration” has been defined in new independent method 7 and is supported in the specification, e.g., at page 11, lines 23-26.

Claims 8 to 11

New dependent claims 8 to 11 correspond to prior dependent claims 3 to 6, respectively, rewritten to improve clarity.

In new dependent claim 11 (corresponding to prior dependent claim 6), it is submitted that the relationship between the annealing, cooling, reheating and hot-dip galvanizing steps is now clear.

Claim 12

The last two paragraphs of new dependent claim 12 are supported in the specification, e.g., at page 11, lines 9-18. The first three paragraphs of new dependent claim 12 are supported by the annealing, cooling and holding steps of new claim 7. **Claim**

Objections

Claims 2 to 6 were objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.75(c) as being of improper dependent form.

In response to this objection, claims 2 to 6 have been canceled by the present amendment and replaced with new claims 7 to 12.

It is submitted that by the present amendment, the objection under 37 C.F.R. §1.75(c) is now moot.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the objection under 37 C.F.R. §1.75(c) be withdrawn.

§112, ¶2

Claims 2 to 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, secind paragraph, as being indefinite.

In response to this rejection, claims 2 to 6 have been canceled by the present amendment and replaced with new claims 7 to 12. New claims 7 to 12 were written taking into account the comments of the Office Action.

It is submitted that by the present amendment, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, are now moot.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Prior Art

There were no rejections of the claims over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that in view of the present amendment and foregoing remarks, the application is now in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that the application, as amended, be allowed and passed for issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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